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THE RIGHI RAILWAY.

THE Righi has been appropriately named a 'delusive' mountain, for, seen from a distance, it looks very easy of ascent; and its position on the Lake of Lucerne is so attractive, that all who travel thither feel tempted to rush to the summit. Easy as it looks, the Righi is, however, very steep in places; and from four to five hours of continuous climbing produce at times serious consequences, especially among those who do no preliminary walking. Not a season passes without a few cases of invaliding of inexperienced tourists, who won't believe that a mountain must be ascended very slowly.

On the other hand, Lucerne has many visitors who would gladly ascend the Righi, but that their weak health forbids all active exertion on their part. To some of these, mountain air is essential for recovery; and if it be asked, Why do they not ride up on horseback? the answer is, that they are too weak or too timid.

Henceforth, these objections may be dismissed, for the Righi Railway removes all difficulties, and makes the ascent so easy, that any one may go up and down, if so minded, twice in the day. The terminus at Vitznau is a few yards from the landing-stage of the steamers. It comprises a luggage-office, ticket-office, and a spacious Restauration, which is also the waiting-room. Somewhat more to the rear are a turn-table and large shed for the engines and carriages. The engine, when on the level turn-table, looks like a huge iron bottle standing on a low platform, which carries cylinders, cranks, and other locomotive gear, and is much lower at one end than at the other. This difference of height imparts an awkwardness of appearance, and the huge bottle, which is, in fact, the boiler and chimney, leans to one side, as if about to fall. But this is planned, and with a purpose, as you will see when the locomotive begins to mount the slope. Then its floor becomes level, and the bottle stands upright. In front of the boiler is a railed space in which luggage is carried; the driver and stoker stand, as usual, in the rear, and the fuel is coal.

The passenger carriages are ten feet wide, and resemble the tramway cars recently introduced in London, and are not, as has been stated, of two stories. The seats, nine in number, are placed transversely, and when all are filled, the carriage contains fifty-four passengers, who find their comfort cared for in the convenient shape of the seats. These carriages and the locomotives were built at Olten, a busy centre of Swiss industry.

The railway gauge is five feet; the sleepers are longitudinal and continuous, as on the Great Western line. Midway between the rails lies what may be described as a heavy iron ladder, with thick steps, slightly bevelled, from below upwards. Up this ladder the locomotive walks, by means of a thick cogged wheel fitted beneath its floor.

There are no trains, unless a single carriage and a locomotive can be named a train. The carriage is pushed up the hill, not pulled. The passengers sit with their faces to the engine, whereby they have the view of the slopes beneath them, of the lake, and of the opposite hills during the ascent. Timid folk should sit in the middle of a seat, so as to avoid the sight of the gulfs and precipices over which the railway passes. The right-hand side (as you look towards the engine) is the best for those who wish to enjoy the prospect.

The pace is about double as fast as ordinary walking. As soon as a carriage starts, a man—a way-watcher—walks ahead, to clear away obstructions that may have fallen from the upper slopes, and especially to pick out stones from between the steps of the ladder. Travellers who have seen the Righi know that it is a mass of pudding, so to speak, with millions of stones for plums. Hence, constant watchfulness is necessary; for a stone in the wrong place would keep out the cog. There are relays of way-watchers, each being responsible for a section of the line; and, as a precaution against accident, each carriage is fitted with an efficient break.

The line stretches in one continuous slope up the mountain, with but slight departures from a straight line. There are no zigzags; half way up, the locomotive stops at a siding to take in water,

an operation which requires about ten minutes. The view becomes more and more interesting with increasing height, and the fresh mountain temperature is felt. Here and there, the footpath from Vitznau makes a slant towards the railway; and tourists are seen going up or down at what seems a slow pace. The sight of them reminds one of Hawthorne's Celestial Railway, and the pilgrims who went plodding in the old-fashioned way. The trees become fewer and fewer, and presently the carriage stops at Kaltbad, a hotel and boarding-house apparently commodious enough already to entertain hundreds of guests, and which is being built still larger. Invalids may now mount to Kaltbad without fatigue, and enjoy from its noble terrace a prospect of sunsets far better worth looking at than all the shivery sunrises seen from the summit.

From Kaltbad, the line stretches up to the Staffel, where, for the present, it terminates. There is talk of extending it to the summit. Meanwhile, travellers who wish to visit the famous Kulm must walk three-quarters of an hour up from the Staffel.

From Vitznau to Kaltbad, the fare is four and a half francs; to Staffel, five francs. The return fare from either place is two and a half francs. No return tickets are given out. The present season has proved very profitable for the proprietors. The carriages have always been full; and the possibility of travel up and down steep gradients, rising in some places one foot in four, has been satisfactorily demonstrated. Three times a day, from June to September of the present year, two locomotives and two carriages have travelled up and down the mountain.

Any one limited as to time, may leave Lucerne by the steamer at 11.30 o'clock in the forenoon, land at Vitznau, go by railway to the Staffel and back, and return to Lucerne within five hours. In the descent, the locomotive precedes the carriage, and by means of its cogs, maintains always the same steady pace.*

CECIL'S TRYST.

CHAPTER XXIV.—AUNT BEN HAS 'A LITTLE SURPRISE' FOR ME.

My first thought, as I looked at Ruth, and while I still held her hands in mine, was: 'What would poor Cecil give to be in my place?' She had always been very beautiful, but her beauty—as happens with most blondes—was not of that sort which unadorned is adorned the most. Art—by which I mean the arts of elegance and fashion—had heightened it to an extraordinary degree, and yet she had not lost her honest country look; her smile had the old sunshine in it still, and not the lime-light.

'So it was to shine in London that you left us all in darkness at Gatcombe, was it, Ruth?'

'Yes, Master Fred,' said she quietly. 'It was the example of your Lady Repton that tempted me to try my fortune on the stage. I could not live on at Wayford, you know; I could not be a burden on—on Mr Cecil all my life; and since he had taught me something—all I know, indeed, that

is worth anything—of how to speak a speech—I resolved to gain a hearing.'

'And you have put out your talent to some interest, Rue.'

'You mean that I get money?' said she simply. 'Well, yes, I do; but I had money to begin with—Mr Cecil's—or else I doubt not matters would have been very different. If I had come to Mr Magnus poor'—She shuddered, and broke off. 'But I was rich, or seemed to be so; and he was pleased to say he thought that I should suit him, and would draw. And I *did* draw, you see.'

'Yes, Rue, and you don't paint,' said I admiringly, 'which does you great credit. You seem to me just the same simple kindly girl you were at Wayford'—

'Then I must be indeed an actress born,' interrupted she with bitterness. 'Don't think it, Master Fred; don't think me "simple," nor a girl, at all: I am a woman grown, that knows, too, how to hold her own against—her friends. God help all women such as I who don't! "Kindly," you said too. Well, perhaps I am: there may be something left of heart about me; but surely I should have been something less than kind, and lower, if, when I heard *your* name, and felt that it might be within my poor power to help you on the path that you have chosen, I had not written to say so. Your visit here is like a breath of fresh air from the high moor at Gatcombe!'

In such a tone of disappointment and dejection were these words of welcome spoken, that a suspicion vague and chill began to steal over me, the influence of which I could not resist.

'The air is pure here, is it not, Ruth?' said I with significance.

'Why ask that question?' inquired she angrily. Then added: 'But I forgot: you have a right. Well, you may tell your cousin he has no cause to be ashamed of me. What made you think he had?'

'Nothing,' said I hesitatingly.

'Yes, there was: come, be frank with me.'

'Well, I had no idea, of course, that this was *your* house; and I did think it strange—though indeed it was no stranger than my own presence here—to find a gentleman'—

'I see,' she laughed out merrily. 'Well, that was my music-master. I am quite ignorant of such things, of course, and Mr Magnus says it is necessary to learn a song or two. Is there any other count against me, Master Fred?'

'Against you? No,' said I. 'But do you think Cecil would approve of your being an actress at all, Ruth?'

'I don't know, Master Fred.' She looked exceedingly embarrassed; her quick flow of words at once deserted her, but she spoke firmly enough, like one whose course of conduct has been decided upon. 'I don't know if he would or not; but how *could* I remain dependent on his bounty when I might never be his wife? He told me that himself at parting; and now—since nothing has been discovered down at Gatcombe—our union is further off and more doubtful than even then.'

'But why did you leave Wayford without letting me know your address, Ruth?'

'Well, that was wrong,' said she; 'but I was ashamed—not of going upon the stage—but lest I should fail; and when I had succeeded' (she hung down her head), 'I was still ashamed.'

* Readers of this article will perhaps correct errors which occur in a brief notice of the Righi Railway in the *Month* for August, page 544.—Ed. C. J.

'Then if you had not chanced to hear of me and of my play, you would have remained "Miss Brabant," and never revealed yourself at all?'

'I cannot say. Don't press that: let it suffice that when I saw an opportunity to help you, I did not resist it; indeed, I could not. It is dreadful to be quite alone in the world, Master Fred. Quite alone,' she added, with a bitter smile, 'and yet among so many friends!'

'I have three letters for you, Ruth, that should have been delivered long ago: I was to have forwarded them'—

'Have you no recent ones?' interrupted she.

'How should I have, when I had informed him you had disappeared?'

'True. But he has written to you recently, has he not?'

'Yes; only yesterday, as it happens, though after a long interval of silence. He is in Switzerland.'

'What! coming home?' cried she, almost, as it seemed to me, in alarm.

'I think not, though my aunt, with whom I am now living, as Mr Barder doubtless told you, is of the contrary opinion.'

'And what does he say of me now?'

Here it was my turn to feel embarrassed; for, as I have said, Cecil had not even mentioned her name in his last letter. 'Well, you see, it was useless his saying much, since'—

'I see,' interrupted she with gravity; 'he says nothing.'

'But his first letters, Ruth, were full of you, and I have no doubt that those of which I have charge are laden with his love. I will send them to you this evening.'

'It is no matter,' said she quietly; 'for I shall not read them.' I looked astonished, and she added pathetically: 'Why should I do so, Master Fred? A love that is blighted and can never ripen, is a dead love. Why should I wound my heart afresh, all to no purpose?'

'But it may ripen, Ruth: time smooths all things but its own wrinkles. My cousin will not always feel so deeply the poison of that cruel accusation which Batty left within him, like a bee's sting, before he died.'

Ruth shook her head, not despondingly, but in absolute negation.

'Well, time alone can shew it,' said I. 'Jane describes her brother as being decidedly more cheerful.'

'His sister is still with him, then?'

'Of course; he clings to her more than ever in his loneliness and anxiety about yourself.'

Deep in thought, Ruth remained silent for a space; then with tender earnestness inquired: 'Will you grant me, for the sake of old times, dear Master Fred., one favour?'

'Most certainly,' said I. 'What is it?'

'Do not mention to Mr Cecil that you have found me.'

'As you please,' said I; for Cecil's last letter made silence on this point comparatively easy to observe. 'But you will let me tell Aunt Ben?' This I stipulated for, since, otherwise, I should scarcely have been able to explain my visit to Laburnum Villa satisfactorily.

'Yes, you may tell your aunt.'

Then I rose to go, for our interview had been a long one.

'I will keep your play, Master Fred.; and shall

be glad to read the other of which you spoke. There is just one thing more—you have never mentioned Miss Eleanor.'

'If I have not,' said I smiling, 'it was only because my mind was occupied with your affairs. She is quite well, and at Gatcombe.'

'And all is well between you?'

'Yes, indeed. Why should you ask?'

'Because I knew your answer would make me happy. Well, you should have no secrets from one another, and you can tell her too that I am Ruth Waller. She will not shrink from me because I am a play-actress, as your Aunt Ben will do. If she were here this moment, she would take my hand, and—and pity me, as she was wont to do in those sad days at Gatcombe. But there, I have to play Florella in two hours' time, and must not have red eyes.—Good-bye, and thank you, Master Fred.'

'Good-bye, Ruth, and thank you.'

Not till I left Laburnum Villa, and was on my way home alone, did the strangeness of my late discovery strike me with its full force. That Ruth should have gone on the stage, and succeeded upon it, did not astonish me so much when I called to mind the change that had been already apparent in her during our last interview at Wayford; that she should not have revealed her purpose while its accomplishment was doubtful, was also explicable enough; but when she had gained her object—had, indeed, been eminently successful, and that, as she had assured me (and I did not doubt her), without loss of self-respect—why then she had not written to say: 'I am well and prosperous, Master Fred.—tell Mr Cecil, was a mystery I could not unravel. For I was no longer of opinion that Ruth did not love my cousin; it seemed to me, on the contrary, that she was apprehensive of loving him too much, and in vain. If she did not care for him, why should she have expressed her resolve not to read those long-delayed letters, without doubt so full of passionate ardour, and have forbidden me to inform him of her calling or place of abode? Like Cecil himself, she probably believed their union to be hopeless, though not on the same grounds. I had never heard from her (though Cecil had said something about her entire acquiescence in his view of the matter) that Batty's accusation against my cousin, so long as it remained disproved, was in her eyes also an insuperable bar to their union; but it was likely enough that from what she knew of his character, she foresaw that it would prove so. Moreover, it struck me, from the half-resentful tone in which Ruth had said: 'His sister is still with him, then?' that she gave my Cousin Jane more credit than she deserved as another source of opposition to their union. Jane had, in reality, no power in the matter (though, if she had, she would have undoubtedly used it like a wedge to separate them); and should the mystery of Richard Waller's catastrophe be discovered, I felt certain that no argument would for a moment detain Cecil from flying to his beloved's arms. To Ruth, however, it doubtless seemed that even if time should lessen the proportions of that obstacle which constantly presented itself to Cecil's sensitive mind, or even remove it altogether, there was always an enemy of hers at his right hand to interpose new impediments.

And yet, having arrived at all these sage conclusions, I was obliged to confess to myself that

Ruth's conduct was an enigma still. It was, perhaps, to get rid of the profitless speculations that filled my mind with regard to her, that I sketched out for myself a little amusement with Aunt Ben, as respected my visit to Laburnum Villa. Since she had treated poor Miss Brabant, and indeed myself, with such undeserved distrust, it was only just that she should be punished a little. I was strengthened in this determination by finding my esteemed relative by no means recovered from her suspicious state of mind, but maintaining a stately reserve, under which it was easy to detect a most vehement curiosity. She would probably have had her tongue cut out, rather than ask the question: 'Well, and what about that wicked woman?' but if it had been, that inquiry would certainly have been found upon the tip of it.

'My dear aunt,' cried I with enthusiasm, 'she's charming!'

'Who's charming?' replied Aunt Ben sharply, and knitting with great rapidity.

'Why, Miss Brabant, of course.'

'I don't want to hear about it, if she is.'

'Oh, but I *must* tell you,' said I. 'You have no idea how kind she has been to me. She has not the least nonsense or *mauvaise honte* about her.'

Here my aunt muttered: 'No *honte* at all, I daresay,' but I affected not to hear her.

'I don't think I ever saw anybody but Nelly so pretty—her black hair was just like Nelly's; and I do believe she will bring out my *Foot-page* at the Corinthum, and play the principal part herself, in tights. Never was such a piece of good fortune; I— Why, what's the matter, aunt? You surely don't think that I've fallen in love with the woman? Why, what on earth is there to cry about? What's happened? What's the matter?'

For, to my horror and amazement, Aunt Ben had suddenly dissolved in tears, and was now sitting, with bowed head, and her work fallen on the ground, looking an older woman by ten years than I had yet known her.

'Nothing has happened that was not to have been expected, I suppose,' sobbed she. 'Your poor father used to say that men were all alike when flattered by a wicked woman; he had one exception in his mind, however, and there he was wrong. It will break Nelly's heart, I know, and it has nearly broken mine. I had such confidence in you, Fred., and now— Well, Nelly is coming up to us, and she will judge for herself. As for me, I wash my hands of it altogether; and she wrung her withered palms as though she had already done so, and was drying them in the air.

'Nelly coming up to town,' cried I, 'and to us! Why, when did you know that?'

'What does it matter?' sobbed my aunt, 'when you will be half your time at Laburnum Villa, or rehearsing things at the theatre with this abandoned young person in—tut—tut—tights.'

'My dear aunt,' said I gravely, 'this has gone too far. You were mistaken in the whole matter from the first, and out of a little revengeful malice, I did not undeceive you. But the fact is, that this Miss Brabant is no other than Cecil's young woman, Ruth Waller.'

And in a few words I told her all. She listened with great interest, and when I had finished, seemed never tired of putting questions on her own

account. 'You shall hear everything in time,' said I at last; 'but tell me first about Nelly's coming to town.'

'Ah, but suppose she isn't coming,' said my aunt. 'If you play tricks on me, why should not I on you?'

If Aunt Ben was joking, her merriment was of a very ghastly kind, and even a little hysterical as well. I felt certain that not only was Nelly coming, but that something very serious had occurred to induce her to do so.

'If there is news from Gatcombe, let me know it, aunt,' said I; 'you have no right to keep it from me.'

'Well, Fred., there is news, and great news; but whether it be good or not is another question. But first, let me ask, have you noticed nothing peculiar in the tone of Eleanor's letters of late?'

'They have seemed to me to be written with effort,' said I; 'not, of course, as regards their affectionate warmth, but their cheerfulness. She tries to make the best of herself; but her long separation from us, and the being shut up alone with that hateful old man at Gatcombe, appear to tell upon her more and more.'

'And that is all,' murmured Aunt Ben, half to herself. 'O Fred., you little know what that dear creature has been suffering!'

'Is Nelly ill?' cried I. 'What do you mean?'

'Yes; ill in mind, Fred.—sick at heart. Persecuted by him who was bound to be her protector, she has confided in me alone, because, if you had known of it, matters would have been made worse. You would have gone to Gatcombe, carried her off under the old man's nose, and probably kicked Sir Richard.'

'Kicked Sir Richard Harewood? Kicked our tenant?'

'Yes, because he has been making love to Eleanor.—There, now, I knew you would put yourself in a tantrum. It's no use your snatching up your hat and stick. The matter is now arranged, and Sir Richard has got his *congé*. But poor Nelly's position has been making me miserable for weeks. I did not like to tell you of it, partly for the reason I have mentioned, and partly because I saw you were so depressed about your play. Every morning I said to myself: "I will tell him to-day;" and every day something occurred with Mr Burder—or did not occur—which put you in bad spirits. "What is the use of making him more miserable than he is," thought I, "when any remedy he may take in his own hands would only make matters worse." Yesterday I was on the very point of telling you; and then that news about the Hole-in-the-Wall came, and I hadn't the heart to do it. Even when this Miss Brabant wrote to you, and it seemed to me that you were about to fall into the net of a bold and forward young person, I still hesitated, since Eleanor had laid on me such strict injunctions to keep her secret; but when you came home to-night, and talked of that undesirable acquaintance so enthusiastically (you naughty boy, to take in your poor old aunt!), then I said to myself: "How can he, can he do so? Oh, if he only knew that his own Eleanor was coming to town!"—and then I told you,' added my aunt quietly.

'But you haven't told me, Aunt Ben, or at least only enough to make me anxious.' And, indeed, when I began to couple this news with the significant

way in which Ruth had inquired whether all was well between myself and Eleanor—doubtless with reference to this Sir Richard Harewood, better known (as I was well aware) than spoken of in theatrical circles—I began to feel very anxious. He was quite capable, from what I had heard of him, of persecuting a girl with his attentions, however unwelcome they might be.

'Well, Frederick,' said Aunt Ben gravely, 'the long and short of the matter is, that that dreadful old Mr Bourne has been throwing Eleanor at Sir Richard's head. He always liked a title dearly; and no doubt it would have been an additional satisfaction to him if he could have secured a baronet for a son-in-law, and at the same time got you jilted.'

'What an old villain!' ejaculated I.

'Yes, but fortunately also what an old fool!' continued Aunt Ben. 'The way he went to work was the very course most fitted to disgust his grand-daughter, and to take another view of what she had hitherto considered to be her duty as regarded himself. She wrote to me a week ago, that she had told her grandfather that if Sir Richard came to the Rectory again, she should leave his roof, and throw herself upon my protection; and as for his money, she frankly told him he might give it to whom he pleased. This indifference to her inheritance must, I suppose, have seemed incredible to the old wretch, or perhaps he doubted her determination; but, at all events, he permitted the baronet to pay another visit; and yesterday, Nelly wrote to say she's coming.'

'When?' cried I excitedly. 'Oh, when?'

'Well, in a day or two. In time to see your play at the Hole-in-the-Wall; and certainly, in time to see the other—at the what do you call it?—in which your beautiful Miss Brabant is to act in tights, sir.'

But I was much too excited and delighted by Aunt Ben's news to feel her satire.

'Dear Fred,' continued my aunt with gravity, 'this is all my doing as respects Eleanor coming hither, for at the first hint of her trouble I invited her; and I do hope that you will not give me cause to repent it. I trust to your good feeling not to use your influence to precipitate a marriage. She will have left her grandfather, it is true, for good and all, as she thinks; and he will have told her that his wealth will now pass into some other channel; and perhaps he is really bent on carrying out that design. But, on the other hand, he may not be so; or if his threat of disinheritance is put in effect for the present, the ties of blood grow stronger as we approach our end, and at the last his heart may turn towards her. He cannot live for ever. And remember, Fred, however indifferent you yourself may be as to whether your wife comes to you as a great heiress or empty-handed, there are others to be considered in this matter; not only Eleanor herself, of whose simplicity we must not take advantage, but also those unborn, who may one day reproach you both for a selfish precipitation. Your motto, therefore, must still be, "Wait and hope."'

'So be it,' said I eagerly; 'it will be happiness enough for the present to see her here under our own roof.' And, indeed, I spoke the truth, for this unexpected news had fairly transported me. But, on the other hand, it made me nervous and apprehensive, as the promise often does of a pleasure that seems almost too great to be realised. Although

I knew that Nelly was not one to be intimidated, or to be kept in subjection unless from a sense of duty, and that all folks around Gatcombe were her friends, and would be, if necessary, her helpers, I was consumed by vague forebodings. The sunshine of Hope was with me, and was also, I well knew, with my darling, but there loomed a dark cloud between the intervening space, which seemed to menace Hope's fruition. Such presentiments of evil are common enough, but seldom verified; and when they are so, the misfortune which we dread comes as often as not from some quite unexpected quarter, and fills us all the more with terror and dismay.

CHAPTER XXV.—BAD NEWS.

In spite of my forebodings, Nelly arrived safe and sound in Merton Square, and filled our house with sunshine. There is, however, no need to paint my raptures, since the intention of this history is to describe not my own life, but only so much of it as is (directly or indirectly) connected with my cousin Cecil. Let it suffice to say that we were supremely blessed in one another's company, and that the contemplation of our happiness used to affect Aunt Ben so sympathetically that she would often burst into tears. We were rather gay than otherwise, for London was as new to Nelly as it had been to me, and its most ordinary amusements afforded her great pleasure. We went pretty often to the theatres, and it quite vexed me to see how she enjoyed the performances, with their Hansom cabs, their real Firemen, and the *bond fide* Well into which the villain of the piece fell backwards with an audible splash. Of course we went to see Miss Brabant act, and all acknowledged that she looked splendidly; but my two companions were rather cold in their encomiums of her talent. I am sure that my aunt did her best to prejudice Nelly against Ruth, and I think in part succeeded. There were no questions asked about my visits to Laburnum Villa, so obviously necessary in connection with my drama of the *Foot-page*, which Miss Brabant had promised to have brought out; and any details of such interviews with which I favoured them were received with but a languid interest. I know it would have given Ruth an intense pleasure—and something more—if Nelly had gone to see her; but when I asked her to do so, she had replied: 'Yes, dear Fred, if you wish it very much;' and, though I was not yet a married man, I knew what that meant.

Ruth never reproached her with this conduct—the offspring not of Pride, of course, but of Aunt Ben's Prudence—nor ceased to speak of her with the utmost gratitude and respect; but it wounded her deeply, and I fear in the end did her grievous harm. It made her feel more than ever that she was cut off from the wholesome side of life, and tended to attach her to that undesirable society among which she had hitherto moved without absolutely belonging to it. My remonstrances with Aunt Ben upon this point were fruitless. She 'had nothing to say against Ruth's character (she was sure), but the young woman had chosen a path for herself of which she, for her part, could in no way approve.' As to the argument, that she should do her best for her, for Cecil's sake, 'it was for his very sake that she wished to have no relations with her; when he came home, it was to be

hoped that he would be in his right mind, and any intimacy on our part was to be deprecated which was likely to bring his old delusion to his recollection.'

Aunt Ben was one of those admirable women who have no parallel in the opposite sex for kindness, self-sacrifice, and good sense—and whose determination not to listen to reason, where their prejudices are concerned, is impregnable.

It was within less than three weeks of Nelly's arrival, that as we three were walking over Southwark Bridge one afternoon, we had to stand aside close to the balustrades while six men went by us, each bearing an immense letter on a placard, and with *To-night* in characters of blood upon their chests, instead of a waistcoat.

'What does that mean?' asked Nelly.

'It's some advertisement of a music-hall or a play,' said I carelessly. 'If you read the letters—supposing the men were in their proper order, which does not always happen—you would get the name of the performance.'

'But I did read them, Fred, and that's what gave me such a surprise. It was the word *Pedlar*, and that'—

In an instant, like one, most literally, 'in hot pursuit of Fame,' I was running after the men with placards. My worst suspicions were realised. On the reverse side of these sandwiches, in a sort of medieval type, on a scroll, appeared the words, *Y' Hole in y' Wall*. A grotesque figure was painted beneath it, a caricature of the manager, or perhaps of myself. Its colours were yellow, and green, and red.

'You are disappointed, dear, I am afraid,' said Nelly's gentle voice, as I stood gazing over the bridge at the dark river, while Hood's poem recurred to my mind with a new meaning:

One more unfortunate,
Rashly importunate.

Just on the brink of it,
Picture it, think of it.

My play was coming out that very night, without a word of warning, at that horrible *Hole*!

I gasped out something, in reply to her kind inquiries, to that effect.

'But the word "*Pack*" was not on the placards,' reasoned Nelly.

'I wish "*Pedlar*" had not been there either,' was my sombre reply. 'O that villain *Burder*!'

'They haven't put "*of Gatcombe*" on the placards, have they, Fred?' pleaded Aunt Ben. 'Not *Wray of Gatcombe*?'

'I daresay it's on the bills,' groaned I despairingly. 'I must go and see.' I hailed a four-wheel cab, and despatched the ladies home in it, then jumped into a Hansom myself. 'Do you know the *Hole-in-the-Wall*?' asked I through the hole in the roof.

'Bingles's *Free and Easy*, we calls it,' was the crushing reply. 'O yes; I'll take you there in no time.'

And he did. He pulled up at a gigantic public-house—for a dram, as I fondly hoped. 'This is Bingles's,' he said. And it was.

I asked at the bar for the proprietor, and was informed that 'Mr Bingles was in the theatre.' A pot-boy undertook to conduct me to him. We passed through a large boarded court with a stand for musicians in it placed in a garden composed of

six American aloes in tubs. 'Here's where they dance,' said the pot-boy, perceiving that I was a stranger to his lord's domain. 'Five hundred couples and more there'll be on a fine night here.'

'And how many does your theatre hold?'

'Our theatre?' said he, as if in delicate reproof of my mispronunciation. 'Oh, that holds as many as it can git.'

'There is a new play to be acted to-night, is there not?'

'I daresay, sir; there mostly is, once a week.'

'Do your plays only run six days, then?' asked I aghast.

'Why, no, sir. If our master was to try to run 'em seven, the Bobbies would be down upon him pretty sharp. You can square 'em a'most for everything, except Sunday-work.'

It was not worth while to undeceive this young man, though my inquiry certainly had no connection with the Sabbath question.

We had arrived at the theatre by this time, a huge oblong edifice, before the stage-door of which a stout squat man was standing in his shirt-sleeves, smoking a pipe.

'That is Bingles,' muttered the pot-boy, and vanished.

For the first time, I beheld a manager in the flesh.

'Morning!' said the great man, taking his right thumb out of the arm-hole of his waistcoat to remove his pipe. 'What can I do for you, sir?'

'I have called upon business in connection with the new play that you are bringing out to-night.'

'Ay, ay; yes, I believe there is one.'

'Believe?' said I. 'Why, it's advertised all over the town.'

Mr Bingles nodded, and removed his pipe once more, to scratch his head with the stem of it.

'I am the author of that play,' said I, with some dignity.

A fly had settled upon the manager's nose, induced by what temptation it is impossible to imagine (if it had been a butterfly, I should not have been surprised, since it might have mistaken that favourable description of eruption known to the Vulgar, if not to the Scientific, as 'grog-blossoms,' for flowers); and Mr Bingles proceeded to catch it with elaboration, and succeeded.

'Very good,' said he. 'You want to have your name in the bills? I thought you would, but *Burder* said you wouldn't. It's not my fault.'

'I want nothing of the kind, Mr Bingles. But I do desire an explanation of your extraordinary conduct in never letting me know that the play was about to be produced. I have not even been invited to a rehearsal.'

'What's the use?' replied the manager curtly. 'It only leads to disagreements. *Gillow*—that's our funny man, you know—will always have his own way; and as for our other people, why, they don't matter.'

'Do you mean that it does not matter how the pathetic and sentimental characters of the *Pedlar's Pack* are sustained?' inquired I in amazement.

'Just so; it don't signify tuppence. If *Gillow* can tickle the public, the play goes; if it don't go, it stops. Our last play stopped quite sudden, and that's how your was put on in such a hurry. Not one of my company,' said Mr Bingles, in triumph, 'knew a line of it yesterday morning!'

'And they're going to act it to-night?'

'Most cert'ny. See bills.'

I had given Mr Burder full authority to dispose of my drama, and I had no reason to believe that I could restrain Mr Bingles from doing what he pleased in the matter; nothing remained for me, therefore, but conciliation. 'I suppose they will take pains to improve themselves in accuracy, and in their conception of the author's meaning, as they go on?' observed I.

'O yes; never fear about that. Gillow is never the same man two evenings running.'

I had already dreadful presentiments about Gillow. 'And how many evenings, Mr Bingles, do you think the *Pedlar's Pack* will run?'

'It is quite impossible to say, sir. It all depends on how Gillow takes. I call him Vaccination on that account; sometimes he spots them, and sometimes he don't. Our last play ran—walked, I should say—like a blessed ghost in an empty house, for three nights. The one we had before was a——'

'Was a *what*?' inquired I, in alarm. I did not quite catch the word; but I have a very strong suspicion that Mr Bingles used the term 'buster.'

'Was a great success,' continued he; 'it ran ten nights.'

'And how much,' said I, emboldened by Mr Bingles's manner to be frank myself, 'did the author make by that transaction?'

'Why, lucky dog!' cried the manager, slapping his knee, 'I offered him thirty shillings down; but he said: "No; I'll chance it—I'll be paid by the night;" and so he was. Five shillings a night, sir, for ten nights, did I pay that fellow; and the copyright of the play remains his own, to do what he likes with.'

This was the one piece of good news that Mr Bingles gave me. The copyright of the *Pedlar's Pack* would remain my own after it had once passed through this terrible ordeal. Along with the other thirty or forty plays—all supplied by answers to advertisements—that came out at the Hole-in-the-Wall per annum, it would probably flourish for a week, then fade, and be forgotten, to reappear, I hoped, in a nobler sphere. As to remuneration, Burder had arranged nothing about that; and there was nothing to be done but to accept the same terms as my predecessor.

My manager and I parted on excellent terms. He had given me a private box for that evening, and his last words were a courteous invitation to partake of refreshment.

'Ave a drain, sir?—No? Well, perhaps to-night, then, you'll come in time to drink a glass with Gillow. You'll find him fust-rate company.'

Aunt Ben, Nelly, and myself were in time for the play that night, but not to drink a glass with Gillow. Our leisure was wholly taken up in the contemplation of the interior of the Theatre Royal Hole-in-the-Wall—its decorations, arrangements, and peculiarities. The box which had been reserved for our use had three cane-chairs in it; but the accommodation in that respect was insufficient; because, as in the case of Silverhair and the Three Bears, somebody had been sitting on the third chair and had sat the bottom out. Round the outside of each box ran a dark fringe of about six inches long, which we at first took for painting in panel: this, however, was caused by a habit in which the inmates indulged of hanging their ungloved hands over the ledges, and beating time

or applause therewith upon the woodwork beneath. In the centre of the building, which was very large, was a refreshment bar (with entrances from the pit), in which was a beer-engine of great power, worked, as it seemed, upon the perpetual motion principle. Delicacies of all kinds—the audience were informed by placard—could be procured within the establishment and without leaving their seats, 'as good as at any house in the neighbourhood.' This was a bold statement, since, to judge from the drop-curtain, which, in place of a classical picture, exhibited a congeries of local advertisements, the neighbourhood was in a condition to supply every desire of humanity from the cradle to the grave—from *Infants' Elixir* to a *One-horse Hearse*. The stalls—for there were stalls—had no divisions between them, and were patronised (my aunt charitably supposed) either by married folk, or by young persons whose engagements were sufficiently acknowledged in society to admit of their being tender towards one another. The protecting arm of the swain (in its shirt-sleeve) was thrown, almost in every case, around his beloved object, who, on her part, leaned her confiding head upon his manly bosom. The question of toilet had greatly puzzled my two companions; they did not like to be too finely dressed—and yet they had an idea that the tenants of a private box ought to do credit to the establishment: the result had been what they considered to be a medium apparel, but which, by its contrast with that of the other female occupants of the house, was a blaze of splendour. Much public comment was therefore passed upon them, which, though for the most part of a complimentary character, they felt to be embarrassing, and were much relieved when the curtain rose, and the general attention was directed to the stage.

It is not my purpose to describe the performance of that unhappy piece; a shiver goes through my frame, as I recall it now, similar to that evoked by the opening of a pill-box. It was not my play at all, but a heterogeneous compound, half of which owed its paternity to me, and half to Gillow. He did not act the comic character, because, I suppose, it was not sufficiently important for him; he took a serious rôle, and made *that* comic. He was the legal guardian of the heroine, a bluff good-humoured gentleman enough (as I had made him), but not likely, when visiting his ward at school, to put on her backboard, and sing a comic song with a dumb-bell in each hand. He made a joke about a 'dumb belle,' which, instead of falling flat, as it ought to have done—it fell on me just like a cold pat of lead—was uproariously applauded. My aunt began to applaud too, which compelled me to tell her that I was not answerable for the witticism. Next to 'gag' (an interpolation of original dialogue), Mr Gillow was remarkable for original costume. He had a green coat with brass buttons and nankeen pantaloons; and they must have been of very durable materials, since, in the second act, though 'twenty years were supposed to have elapsed' in the action of the drama, he wore them still. As to the pathetic touches, they moved me to tears of chagrin; for the actresses had but one solitary *h* among them, which they invariably prefixed to the word 'honour.' A cry for assistance in extremity, followed by the reflection that, under the circumstances, it was no use to cry, was thus rendered by the heroine: 'Elp, 'elp! but 'ow?' Then, with a disappointed air,

she added: 'Alas, I 'ave no 'ope, except in 'caven.'

Altogether, the *Pedlar's Pack*, as performed at the Hole-in-the-Wall, was too dreadful to sit out; the Inquisition itself could hardly have devised for a dramatic author a torture more terrible than to see his first-born play so torn in pieces before his eyes.

When we had left the place, however, and were in the cab, and just as Aunt Ben was in the act of saying something of consolation and condolence, the full absurdity of the whole affair began to strike us, and we all three indulged in quite a paroxysm of laughter. We had each a favourite quotation to repeat from Mr Gillow, or an aspiration (without an aspirate) from the other performers, and made very merry with our *fiasco* all the way home.

I know not whether it really is so, but it seems to me that it is the times when the laughter is loudest, and the heart most free from care, which envious Fate selects to shoot at us poor mortals her sharpest arrows.

I noticed that as soon as we entered the house, my aunt's mirth had died away; she ate nothing at supper, though we had a lobster, which was her favourite dish, and immediately afterwards proposed retiring up-stairs, on the plea of fatigue.

I was sitting in my own room, with a pipe, as my custom was when the ladies had withdrawn, when the door opened, and in came Aunt Ben with a ghastly face.

'I found this on the hall table when we came home,' said she, holding up a letter with a deep black edge. 'I snatched it up, and put it in my pocket, so that Nelly should not see it. It is from Switzerland, and I am afraid there is bad news.'

'Good heavens!' cried I; 'from Cecil?'

'Open it; it is for you,' said my aunt, with a certain twitching at the corners of her mouth, which only manifested itself with her at times of great emotion. I tore open the envelope at once.

'It is bad news,' said I solemnly. 'Poor Jane is dead!'

'Lord have mercy on us!' ejaculated my aunt. 'I knew there was death in it. I am sorry, Heaven knows, from the bottom of my heart; and yet I am almost ashamed to say it: I feel thankful that it is no worse.'

'No worse?' returned I, greatly displeased; for though my conscience was clear enough as respected poor Jane, I felt at the moment a sort of remorse that I had been unable to reciprocate her affection. 'How could it have been worse, aunt?'

'My dear,' said she, 'I was afraid that it was Cecil.'

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE desire for International Exhibitions is spreading. Austria is to hold one in 1873, under direction of a Commission which has just been appointed by the emperor. As is well known, Austria figured handsomely in the Great Exhibitions held in London and Paris, and now that she invites a rivalry on her own soil, she will no doubt shew to better advantage than ever. Austrian artists and artificers are proverbially clever and ingenious, and are rivals not easily to be excelled. Judging from the published programme, there is scarcely any-

thing in art, science, or industry which may not be exhibited; and an arrangement is contemplated by which 'the treasured collections of the various museums of London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Lyon, Munich, Stuttgart, and other cities, will appear in simultaneous position; and it is further intended to present a history of inventions, a history of prices, a history of industry, and a history of natural productions; which will afford an admirable means of test and comparison among different nationalities. To such an undertaking as this we heartily wish success. The site of the Exhibition is to be the Prater, that well-known park, easy of access as our own Hyde Park; and considering Vienna itself will well repay the cost and trouble of the journey, visitors in 1873 should be very numerous.

A means for increasing the inductive effect of a lightning-conductor has been introduced in the United States. It is called the *Equilibrium Disk*, and consists of a cast-iron star about forty pounds weight, which has seventy-two horizontal and vertical rays or discharging points. This disk must be buried in the ground at a depth usually of six feet where constant moisture may be anticipated. The conducting rod being then fixed in the central hole by a copper ring or wedges, the instrument is ready for use, and, by reason of the number of discharging points in the disk, is believed to be more efficient than the ordinary conductor.

The systematic meteorological observations now carried on in different countries afford facilities for test and comparison, of which observers are not slow to avail themselves. From one of these comparisons, an American observer finds the presumption strengthened, that in the Atlantic States, signs of fair weather may be most confidently trusted during the ten days preceding full moon, and signs of rain during the eight days following. He finds also that the heaviest rainfalls at Lisbon, and the lightest at Philadelphia, occur in the autumn and winter six months, and the reverse in the spring and summer six months. These are steps towards a complete knowledge of the meteorology of the globe.

Mr Pengelly mentioned at the meeting of the British Association that he had made an analysis of the daily rainfall at Torquay, with a view to determine the influence of the moon on the rainfall, and he was of opinion that he had detected that influence. From the first day before the full moon to the first day before the first quarter, dry weather may be expected: on the contrary, if wet weather occurs, it will be from the beginning of the first quarter to the second day before full moon. In treating this subject, it should always be remembered that the Astronomer-royal shewed, twenty years ago, that the changes of the moon had nothing to do with changes of the wind, as was and is believed by seamen. He made it clear, from seven years' observations at Greenwich, that there is no relation between any age of the moon and any direction of wind. But there is one influence of the moon which may be taken as demonstrated—namely, that full moon dissipates cloud. Hence it is that nights are clear as the moon approaches and recedes from the full.

From the annual Report of the Meteorological Office we learn that the systematic work of observation is making good progress; that the Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty is preparing for

publication a thorough discussion of the weather that prevailed in the Atlantic when the *City of Boston* steam-ship was lost; that a chart of the winds at the principal stations around our coasts is to be published every afternoon in the *Shipping and Mercantile Gazette*; and that the readings of the barometer and thermometer will be printed therewith as soon as proper arrangements can be made.

During the time that these observations have been carried on, meteorologists have discovered that a station far out in the Atlantic would be eminently useful in the system of storm-warnings. At the meeting of the British Association, the Azores were mentioned as a favourable site; and it is probable that a cable will be laid to connect one of those islands with the English cable at Lisbon; then the telegraphic announcements from the Azores will appear with those from all the other stations in the daily reports of the Meteorological Office.

Professor Whitfield, of the University of Alabama, who has, to quote his own words, 'enjoyed' opportunities of witnessing the formation and course of a tornado, says that, in the Southern States, the course of tornadoes is always from a point south of west to a point north of east, the gyration always from right to left, and that the gyration velocity is commonly one hundred and twenty or one hundred and sixty miles an hour. This explains why trees, houses, and everything in the path of the tornado are thrown down or swept away. The professor once saw 'a pine tree, sixteen inches in diameter, and sixty feet long, float out from the black vortex of a tornado, at the height of a quarter of a mile, and sail round, to all appearance, as light as a feather.'

During the past summer, a German vessel has been employed in taking careful series of soundings in the Baltic, cruising in different directions, with a view to ascertain the depth, the currents, and other phenomena of that peculiar sea. The greatest depth, seven hundred and twenty feet, is between Gothland and Windau; from which it appears that the sea is not so deep, by three hundred and eighty feet, as was believed from former soundings. Between six hundred feet and the bottom, the water was exceedingly cold, even in July; no vegetation was brought up by the dredge, and no living thing, except a few worms. Plants are most abundant in the first sixty feet below the surface, and animals are numerous down to three hundred feet. Below that depth, the cold probably checks the existence of fresh-water species, while the small quantity of salt in the water is fatal to the life of marine animals. Generally speaking, it may be said that the western half of the Baltic contains abundant life and vegetation, while the eastern half is barren. We understand that a full account of this exploration, with the scientific results, the force, extent, and direction of currents, the proportion of fresh, salt, and brackish water, and lists of animals and plants, is to be published. Salt water is poured in an under-current from the North Sea, while the brackish water flows out as a surface-current.

In this we have another example of the desire that now prevails to investigate the physics and natural history of our globe. It is a work in which all nations may take part; for that which is as yet accomplished is but a small part of the

whole. As readers of *The Month* are aware, a large share has been done by this country; but this is now to be exceeded, and announcement has been made that a dredging expedition, sanctioned by the government, is to sail on a four years' cruise, in which the whole length and breadth of ocean from the Arctic to the Antarctic Circle will be explored. As seems fitting in this great undertaking, we shall have the co-operation of the United States.

This is a fact which may be taken into consideration by those who complain that our government does nothing for science. And we may add that the Lords of the Treasury have granted two thousand pounds for cost of instruments, and expenses of the astronomers and others who have volunteered to go out and make observations of the total eclipse of December next. There are interesting questions as to the constitution of the sun, and in physical optics, yet to be solved; and these require scientific co-operation.

Among the preliminaries for observation of the transit of Venus, it has been arranged that photography shall be employed, as well as the eyes of observers. This is satisfactory, for many astronomers and students of physical science are now agreed that photography offers advantages in the observation of celestial phenomena which can be attained in no other way. Especially in observations of contact, whether during a transit, or an eclipse of the sun, the photographic process may be depended on for results. In some instances, the eye observations may be corrected by the photographic pictures, which can be studied at leisure, months after the event. Of course, all methods are liable to error: it will, therefore, be necessary that the errors which may occur in a photographic observation of a contact should be carefully studied beforehand. That this will be done may be regarded as certain; and thus we have another example of the important service which chemistry may render to astronomy.

Mr Ritchie of Boston, U. S., has constructed an electric coil containing forty-four and a half miles of wire, and weighing two hundred and fifty pounds, which, with but three cells of a battery, will give sparks twenty-one inches in length. Much of this effect is due to the manner in which the wire is wound in a series of spirals on the core, and by the introduction of layers of paraffine paper at regular intervals to give additional insulation. When in full work, the sparks from this coil will pierce glass three inches thick.

Some three or four years ago, a fossil human giant was dug up on a farm near Syracuse, state of New York. It was a wonderful discovery, and the newspapers described it as one of the antediluvian giants mentioned in Scripture. The monster was exhibited to admiring crowds in towns and cities; but at last the truth has crept out. The 'fossil' was carved out of a block of gypsum brought from a quarry near Fort Dodge (appropriate name!), Iowa, was made to look ancient by well-known tricks, and then buried in the hole where it was afterwards discovered. This attempt to attract the scientific portion of the community as well as the common herd of sightseers may be regarded as a refined touch of Yankee ingenuity.

The French geologists have collected, and exhibited in Paris, specimens of the different rocks pierced by the great tunnel through the Alps, under

Mont Fréjus. Generally they are similar in character, limestone and schist; and as was stated at a meeting of the Académie des Sciences, the mass 'is part of a single enormous formation, in spite of a few special differences.' In the excavation of some of our English tunnels, the principal difficulty has been to stop out the water; but in the Alpine tunnel one spring only was met with, and that yields not more than seven gallons a minute. Water for the workmen and the works had to be brought from a distance. It is said that Signor Sismonda, an Italian geologist, published twenty years ago a treatise with a map descriptive of the strata through which the great tunnel is pierced; and that his description proves to be as accurate as if he had been able to see through the whole thickness of the mountain.

A discovery, of great importance, has been made by chemists in Germany: it is, that indigo can be produced artificially. As yet the process is by far too elaborate and costly for practical use, but the fact remains that an operator working in his laboratory can now produce a colouring matter for which we have hitherto been indebted to Nature and careful cultivation. Great things have been achieved by the discovery of artificial dyes in recent years, and this of artificial indigo will some day lead on to greater.

Among recent patents and improvements, we notice one for making ordinary tallow candles which require no snuffing. Hence consumers of 'dips' may now lay aside their snuffers, and avoid some of the risks and inconveniences which their use involves.—A method of refining oil introduced in France seems based on the Bessemer process for making steel. The oil is heated; slender jets of sulphuric acid are mingled therewith, and air is driven in with force, whereby the whole mass is made to bubble vehemently. The effect is soon seen in the thick scum, which must be removed as often as it collects on the surface. The blowing in of air is continued until the oil is sufficiently clarified; it is then subject to a course of steaming, after which it is so pure that a wick burned therein for some days is said to remain perfectly clean, and to shew no signs of the black crust so often seen on lamp-wicks.

MISS BROWN.

IN FOURTEEN CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER X.

THE day came on which Miss Brown was to re-enter her old abode. She put off her return there till the evening. She was afraid of being noticed and watched—afraid, too, of having to face all at once the familiar rooms in the dreary distinctness of the broad daylight. So, when the dusk of the early summer evening was come, she packed herself, with her luggage, which she had tried to make as small as possible, into a cab, and so returned to the old house she had left so joyfully scarcely six months ago. It was a soft, warm evening. It would be very pleasant out at Elm Grove amongst the green fields, and bright flower-beds, and shady trees; but she did not want to go to Elm Grove again.

It was a summer evening, and therefore there was no need of even a fire to welcome her back to her lodging parlour. She missed this mute welcome more than she liked to own to herself. It was so cheerless, to sit down in the gray twilight

to drink her solitary cup of poor, unrefreshing, lodging-house tea. There was nothing for it but to get to bed as quickly as she could; yet she dreaded going to bed. She would have to wake up to-morrow in her old room, and once again face the thought of her poverty; just as if the last six months' peace and comfort had only been a dream of the night. Had she been a Roman Catholic, there might have come to her, at this gloomy moment, some soothing, consoling vision of a refuge in some quiet convent home. Being a staunch and pious Protestant, of an old-fashioned school, she never thought of wishing for such a door of escape from the weary world. She knew she must remain where she was, take up her burden, and bear it as best she could; and she thought, even through all the sadness that so crushed her down, that she would try to do her best.

It seemed wonderful how readily she fell back into her old habits. She went about her small housekeeping, she talked to her landlady, and did her modest little shopping just as she used to do, making no show of martyrdom, or even of regret. At first, several of the acquaintances she had lately made came to call on her, eager to shew their sympathy and admiration. She felt grateful to them for their kindness, but could not help shrinking sensitively from their somewhat inquisitive condolences. And as they found her shy and reserved, and unwilling to speak of herself, there was some difficulty in sustaining conversation. After a while, their visits became fewer. 'Poor Miss Brown! They were very sorry for her, and they thought she had behaved beautifully. But she was such a very quiet, silent person, one never knew what to talk about. Indeed, she had always seemed to them unsocial. They really were not sure that it was of much use keeping up the acquaintance, for, of course, she would now decline all invitations. And, after all, she was as well off now as she used to be, and they supposed she was contented enough; she looked so, at anyrate. And there was no doubt that Mrs Barker had no business to leave her her money, and she could never have expected such a thing.' Then by degrees the interest in Miss Brown changed into an interest in Major Fortescue. It was understood that he was coming home at last. He had been prevented from leaving India at the time first intended, and so his return had been delayed. Some said that he was in bad health. Poor man, he was probably broken down by a long Indian service, and it would have been very hard on him if he had been kept out of the money which his relation had meant to give him. There was much speculation about him. Was he old or young—married or single? Nobody could find out much about him. Mr Finch had discovered most, and was not without hopes that Major Fortescue would, at least, prove himself sensible of the generosity of Miss Brown's behaviour; but, until his arrival, and until it was seen how he meant to act, Mr Finch was not going to say much.

Mrs Lorimer came to see her cousin, but the calls were not pleasant to either. Mrs Lorimer not only thought herself entitled to resent Priscilla's nonsensical conduct, as she called it, but was also tormented by a new uneasiness about her brother. Of course he ought not to dream of marrying Priscilla now; but she was not sure that he was not dreaming of it still. She could not get him to

speak on the subject. It was in vain that she talked herself, and threw out many hints about the impropriety of not making Priscilla clearly understand that Robert's proposal must now be looked on as cancelled. Robert would say not a word, except to hint gruffly in his turn that he knew what he was about, and needed no advice. Poor Mrs Lorimer was in misery. To make way for Priscilla with her forty thousand pounds had not been palatable to her; but supposing she had to make way for her now! She could not think of it with patience. Priscilla, for her part, was silent and reserved, with a something of cold dignity in her manner which kept Mrs Lorimer from venturing on any open catechising of her on this important matter.

So the time went on. Miss Brown lived patiently in the old quiet way, and alone never named Major Fortescue's name; and Mr Finch took care now not to talk to her of any expectations from him. The days were very long. Sometimes in her lonely walks she passed Mrs Barker's house, never without a secret shrinking, as she recollected the day of the funeral and all that had happened since—the vicissitudes of hope and fear, and pain and pleasure, ending at last in such a dreary, hopeless blank. Sometimes, however, she would think with a sigh of satisfaction, that poor Mrs Barker would be glad, could she know what had been done. And she always dwelt on the thought of the friendliness which had prompted the old lady to make her unfortunate will, not on that of the bitterness and vexation which the ill-judged gift had brought herself. One other comforting reflection she had: she always congratulated herself that she had not at once accepted Mr Dixon's proposal. Supposing she had married him, and not found out until afterwards all about Major Fortescue and his claim! Supposing Robert had, as she now felt pretty sure he would have done, insisted on keeping the money!

CHAPTER XI.

There came one hot glaring August day. All Millchester people who could afford it, and were not kept in the town by business, had left it fully six weeks ago, and gone to summer lodgings, or seaside watering-places, or on foreign rambles. Mrs Lorimer had gone away too, though she hardly needed to leave Elm Grove for health or comfort; but she found it convenient to go away, particularly as she had succeeded in persuading her brother to take a holiday, and come with her. She would not have gone herself, and left him in Priscilla's neighbourhood. Men were very obstinate when they made up their minds to a thing, and having once made up his mind to marry his cousin, Robert might be strangely and perversely bent on carrying out his intention. However, Mrs Lorimer, to her great satisfaction, managed to induce him to bear her company in her trip to Scarborough with less difficulty than she expected. The truth was that Mr Dixon himself was not sorry to have an excuse for keeping away for a time from Millchester. His heart smote him sometimes when he returned of an evening to his home, and thought of poor Priscilla sitting lonely and neglected in her lodging: only, he could not invite her to Elm Grove while his sister was so opposed to her coming, unless he fairly shewed

that he was determined on renewing his proposal; and he had decided on waiting for Major Fortescue's return before doing so. So, in the meantime, he was rather glad to leave home altogether, thus avoiding both the risk of shewing attention to Priscilla, and the uncomfortable feeling that he was neglecting her.

She knew they were gone, and she, too, was glad of it. She would not be troubled with any visitors now. So much the better, she said to herself. Yet she could not help thinking of what Mrs Lorimer's own plan for this very summer had been. 'You have never been abroad, Priscilla,' she had said to her one day, during that last visit of hers to Elm Grove. 'This summer we will go—you and I, and Robert. You would like to see Switzerland, wouldn't you? We will go there. Of course you won't think of remaining all the summer in Millchester.' And Priscilla had caught eagerly at the idea, and her head had been full of their projected travels, until she had been startled out of her pleasant anticipations by the shock of Mr Dixon's proposal.

'Well, I might have gone to Switzerland this summer,' she said to herself on this particular sultry, baking August day, as she looked out of her parlour window on the hot, grass-grown street. The tears came into her eyes for a minute, and a bitter, sore feeling to her heart. Both her cousins seemed to have forgotten how dull her summer here must be. Then she checked the resentful, regretful thought. 'What do I want! I don't want to be with them; and I'm sure—I'm sure I don't wish I had acted differently. How could I have acted differently! I could not have kept that money. How thankful I ought to be that I don't want it—that I have enough to live comfortably on without it. How much better off I am than many others.' And she thought of a poor crippled invalid woman whom she used to visit, who had once seen better days, and was now dragging out the remainder of her life in a lodging poorer and more cheerless than her own. She determined that she would go and see her now.

She put on one of her oldest and shabbiest dresses, with a black shawl and an old straw bonnet, for she had to pass through a low, crowded part of the town; and, taking a basket with some little delicacies for the invalid, set forth.

She paid a long visit to the sick woman, and came away at last, faint with the heat and the close stifling atmosphere of the room. As she came out into the street, she threw back her veil to get some fresh air. In doing so, the basket slipped from her arm. Before she could stoop for it, a gentleman passing had picked it up, and turned to give it her. As he looked at her, he exclaimed: 'Lily!'

The air had revived her, but she was still a little giddy and confused, and at his exclamation she only looked at him wonderingly, without at once recognising him. He saw she did not, and his look of joy gave place to one of disappointment and pain. 'I beg your pardon. You don't remember me!' he said, a little stiffly and reproachfully.

Not remember him! No; she would perhaps scarcely have remembered his face at that moment. But how suddenly there flashed on her the recollection of his voice—of that very tone, with its quiver of pain, which seemed to have echoed in her memory all these years.

'Mr Lawrence!' she gasped; and the paleness fled from her face, and for a moment nearly all the beauty of its youth flushed back to it. 'Oh, is it really you!' She held out her hand eagerly, readily, with a frank gladness very different from her usual shy reserve. But as she felt how warmly he grasped it, she grew almost giddy again; and it was no wonder that in the surprise of a meeting so strange that she could hardly realise who it was with whom she now stood face to face, she scarcely knew what she was saying or doing.

'And is it really you!' he said, echoing her words. Then his eye glanced from her face to her dress, as if he expected to discover something from it, but in her agitation she did not notice this, and even if she had noticed it, she could not have understood the meaning of his glance. She did not know what an encouraging sight to him were her crepeless dress and her ordinary bonnet, or that he was saying to himself with a thrill of satisfaction: 'She has left off her weeds!'

Then they walked on together, so as to get out of the dirty, noisy lane, and Miss Brown could hardly have told where she was and whither she was going. And he, too, thought he must be dreaming. Had he really found her again, his lost first love? Could this be her own actual self? He kept turning and looking at her. Yes, it was herself! Older, of course, but how strangely—how almost incredibly little changed! There was the same graceful figure—the same pale, fair skin, the same sweet eyes, even the same soft brown hair. It was the very 'Lily' whom he had lost, and whom he had not thought to find again. For though in his heart he had kept so romantically faithful to the remembrance of his first love, he had been almost over-careful to avoid indulging any romantic expectations of finding her unchanged. He believed that she had been married and widowed since he had seen her; and when he had dreamed, as for years he had done, of seeking her out, and once more trying to win her, he had never allowed himself to forget the changes which years must have brought to her as well as to himself. In spite of all such possible changes, he was sure that he had never seen any one who could be to him what she might be, if only he could persuade her to take him at last. But all the time, he had been so cautiously and carefully picturing to himself something so faded, so old, so forlorn of all girlish beauty, that now, when he saw her again, he could scarcely, in his first delighted surprise, see a wrinkle on her brow or a gray hair mixed with the brown! And best of all, here was no broken-hearted, broken-spirited widow, clinging to the weeds and the memory of her first marriage. She was still in black, of course, but it looked very simple, unostentatious mourning, even to his unlearned eyes; and she had welcomed him with a smile of happiness—just such a smile as he used to love to watch for long ago.

'You haven't forgotten me, then, after all? I thought you had—at first,' he said. 'I should have known you anywhere. How long ago is it since—since?' He did not want to say, 'since we parted'; he did not want to remind her that she had once refused him.

'It is just one-and-twenty years since I saw you,' she said simply, looking at him with a smile which said very plainly, 'and I am very glad to see you

again.' He could scarcely believe in his good luck. She had even kept count, as he had done, of the time that had passed since they had met!

Perhaps not exactly 'as he had done.' But she was at least not unwilling to look back on that last meeting. He thought more of this, however, afterwards. Just now, his mind was too full of the wonder and satisfaction of having found her again at all.

'To think of my meeting you!' he said, still looking at her, as if he were half-incredulous of the reality of her appearance. 'And here too—in this place—where I so little thought of finding any one whom I had ever seen before! And you! Do you know, I was just going to start for Australia'—'to look for you,' was on his tongue, but he checked himself. He felt, even in his bewilderment, that he might be allowing himself to run on too fast.

'Australia!' she repeated. And suddenly her heart seemed to die within her. So he was going out to Australia; he was not going to stay in Millicester. She had meant to ask him, chiefly for the sake of covering her own agitation and flurry, by getting him to talk of himself, what had brought him to Millicester; but now the word 'Australia' seemed to choke her, and for a minute or two she could say no more.

'But are you really living here, in this town?' he continued. 'Is it possible? Is your home here, after all?'

'Yes, my home is here,' she replied, in a weary, absent tone, which sounded cold and discouraging to him. After a pause he asked: 'And—for how long—since when have you lived here?'

'Since my sister's death.' She spoke very low, and through the noise of the street, and the rumbling of carts and cabs, he could only indistinctly hear what she said. He fancied she was speaking of the death of her husband. After this they walked on for some minutes in silence. He, in his turn, was somehow chilled and sobered now; and she was struggling with that almost overpowering feeling of disappointment which made her so nearly burst into tears. For a moment she had been thinking that she had got her old friend back again, the friend who seemed now almost like the only one she had ever had; and now she knew it was only for that little moment. He was going away to the other side of the world; from which he seemed so suddenly to have come. He was going back to Australia—back, probably, to his home and his family. As this last idea occurred to her, she made a desperate effort to rally her energies. She ought not to walk on silently beside him, as if they had time enough before them to say all that was to be said. He had asked about her home; she ought to ask about his. In a sort of agony of trepidation, she tried to frame some suitable question; before she could bring her lips to ask it, they had got to the street where she lived. She turned down it, and he followed her. 'Is it here where you live?' he asked.

'Yes; this is my house—my home, that is. Will—will you?' She stopped, blushing. It was so strange, so difficult for her to invite him, as a mere ordinary acquaintance, to enter her door.

'Thank you; I must not stop now,' he said with a strange, hasty abruptness which made her shrink back into herself, vexed that she had tried to

detain him. 'I am on my way to the station; I have to be in town this evening. I must say good-bye to you now.' He held out his hand, and she instantly held out hers, interpreting his almost nervously hurried manner as meaning that he was impatient to be gone.

'Good-bye. I am very glad I have met you.' And as she tried to say the conventional words with a smile, her heart died within her. Was it thus he had bidden her good-bye one-and-twenty years ago? Perhaps the very smile, brave as it was, only made her eyes more wistfully sad, for suddenly he grasped her hand tight, and said with a kind of impatience: 'Yes, I must go. It can't be helped. But I'll write—you'll let me write to you? And I'll—I'll see you again. I'll be here again this day week.'

She could not have told how she answered him; she did not know how she got at last within her own door—only there she was, sitting again alone in her own parlour, and he was gone.

But had he not promised to see her again, and talked of writing to her?

CHAPTER XII.

But the week went on, and no letter came. At first, she did not wonder at this; she said to herself, when she thought quietly over their interview, that it was not likely that he would have time to sit down to write a letter to her, and that he could only have spoken of doing so from an impulse of kindness, which made him wish to soften the apparent unfriendliness of their hurried parting. He seemed to be full of business, and he had told her that he was on the point of starting for Australia. Of course, it was possible that he might have some wish to hear more of her history during the last twenty years, and to tell her something more of his own than there had been time for in that brief, confused quarter of an hour. But if his business obliged him to return the following week to Millchester, it was not likely that he would give himself the trouble of writing what could more easily be talked of during an afternoon call.

In spite, however, of these reasonable reflections, she became depressed and disappointed as day after day passed and brought her no letter. Certainly, he *had* spoken of writing, and it was not like him—it used not to be like him, at least—to make empty promises. What if he equally failed to keep his promise of coming back to see her! When she thought of this possibility, she could almost have wished that they had not met again at all; for before that day she had been trying to feel contented, and to reconcile herself to the old weary life, and now it seemed as if the uphill work must be begun all over again. Would it not have been better for her not to have met him? Yet she could not quite agree to this. She could not help recollecting how he had called her 'Lily,' and how pleasant it had been to hear the old, half-forgotten name; and she knew that it made her happier to think that he had met and remembered her, even though she might see no more of him.

During this week, she got a letter from Mr Dixon. He had been thinking that he would like to hear something of her. He had written, on some pretence of business, to Mr Finch; but Mr Finch had gone to London; and from him Mr Dixon would hear nothing of Major Fortescue's

proceedings, for Mr Finch was now very cautious, and having had cause to distrust Mr Dixon, he would not now say more to him than he could help. Then he determined to write to Priscilla herself. He did so without letting his sister know of it; and he wrote his letter very skilfully and carefully, and much to his own satisfaction; for while he shewed Priscilla that he was still interested in her and her affairs, he left it uncertain whether the interest was or was not purely cousinly. And he put his letter into the post one morning during his early walk, and then went home to breakfast with a comfortable certainty in his mind that he was keeping things in a convenient train for further action, according as might seem advisable.

His letter reached Miss Brown one evening towards the end of the week of waiting. She saw the postman coming down the street as she stood watching at her window: within the last few days she had taken to watching for him as she never used to watch before. She saw him cross the street, and come straight to her door; and before, in her flurry of hope and joy, she had remembered that she had more than one probable correspondent, a letter was brought her. She caught it up in nervous, trembling eagerness, and saw at once that it was from Robert Dixon.

In her first vexation, she did not open the letter for some moments; then, rebuked by a sense of duty, she opened it, and read it through, but with so much impatience and wandering of mind, that it is to be feared she missed both the force and the delicacy of the elaborately turned sentences; and at the end preserved only a confused notion that Robert wrote less clever letters than she had imagined. And then she threw it aside—no, she actually tore it up, a thing which she had never done with an unanswered letter in her life before. She hated the sight of that deceiving envelope, and made haste to get rid of it.

The next day was the one which Mr Lawrence had spoken of as the day of his return to Millchester, the day on which he might come to call on her. She was wary now of allowing herself to expect anything, and she assured herself that she did not expect to see him. Yet she rose earlier than usual, pretending to herself that she did so on account of the extra fineness of the morning, and dressed herself very carefully, as for a great and festive day. She had been tempted to put on one of her handsome dresses, one of the rich silks that were lying carefully folded up in her drawers, and which she shrank from wearing as if they had been stolen goods. She took out a soft, glossy, violet silk, and held it up, and spread it out on her bed, and gazed at it admiringly, and remembered how becoming it used to be to her, and how well she had looked in it. Might she not put it on to-day? When he had met her, she had been so shabbily dressed: she must have looked so old and faded! She would not like him to preserve such a recollection of her. To-day, at least, she would like once more to look her very best.

No; it must not be. What right had she to deck herself out in costly silk and rich lace? She was very poor; and her natural good taste and sense of fitness, no less than her honesty, made the wearing of such dress no longer possible to her. So, not without a pang of regret, she put the violet silk away again into its drawer, and put

on a plain gray gown of some thin, soft stuff, which was indeed a better dress than her ordinary morning one, but still cheap, common, and severely simple. And yet, what pains the arrangement even of this unpretending robe cost her! How anxiously she scrutinised the sit of her collar, and how often she tied and untied the ribbon which fastened it! Great searchings of heart did even this poor little blue ribbon occasion her. Was it too girlish, too gay? Did it make her look as if she were trying to seem young and pretty again? She could quite recollect a certain muslin dress with a blue ribbon which she had worn on the very day that Charles Lawrence had told her of his love. Would he remember it? Would he think she was trying to make him forget what a long time ago that was?

However, the ribbon held its place; and she went down to her parlour, and tried to make it look its best too; and blushing at her own folly and extravagance, expended a shilling on a bunch of fresh roses for her table. She was half-ashamed even of her flowers, and moved them about in a dozen ways before she was satisfied to leave them alone. And the day wore on, and the roses seemed to fade and grow scentless, and once, when she got up and looked at herself in the glass over the chimney-piece, she started to see how pale and anxious was her face! She sat down again on her chair, and buried her face in her hands, careless now of what became of her cap and her ribbons. He was not coming: it was no use for her to sit there longer waiting for him. He was probably off on his journey to Australia, and without even sending her a line of farewell. Never in all her life had she felt so lonely and desolate as she felt just now!

And so, just at the right moment, the darkest moment, came the long-delayed sunshine. She heard an impatient rattling of wheels, a still more impatient knock; and it was all so sudden, that she had hardly time to start up and put her cap straight before he was in the room, standing opposite to her, and once more holding her hand, but this time as if he never meant to let it go again. It was just as well for him that he took her so by surprise. If she had been duly prepared for his arrival, with her senses all about her, and her little proprieties and dignities all at hand, his second courtship might have considerably tried his patience, and would certainly have been carried on under much greater difficulties. But just now, in her excitement and happy confusion, she fortunately forgot everything but her joy at seeing him, and all she could say, still half-crying, was: 'I thought you were not coming!'

'Not coming! But you got my letters! O Lily, why didn't you answer them? I begged you to send me only one line. I have been desperate at getting not a single word from you!'

He was calling her Lily, just as he used to do! Miss Brown felt as if she were no longer Miss Brown! But how could she help it? She could only stare at him in bewilderment.

'You got my letters? Surely you got my letters?' he repeated.

'I never got one.'

'You never got my letters! But I addressed them here, to this house—Mrs Dixon, 12 Green Street.'

'Mrs Dixon!' She drew her hand away from

him now, and looked suddenly offended and dignified. 'I am not Mrs Dixon.' Then, as she thought how very nearly she had escaped being Mrs Dixon, she could have cried with vexation at the idea of having had her name so coupled with her cousin's as to give any foundation for such a report. But Mr Lawrence was too impatient to find out the truth to give her time for her private speculations. He had first to explain to her how his mistake had arisen: how, first of all, he had been misled by an old report of her engagement to a Mr Dixon. And again Miss Brown blushed with annoyance at the recollection of her girlish mistake. Then he told her that he had next heard of her having been seen in Australia with her husband; and this puzzled them both, until she remembered that a cousin of the Dixons had actually married, and gone out with his wife to Australia about that time.

'Mrs Dixon was described to me as tall, and fair, and slender; and I seemed able to think of no other tall, slender, fair woman in the world but yourself! Then, afterwards—years after—I chanced to fall in again with the same man who had told me, as I believed, that he knew you; and he told me then that he had heard you were a widow, but that you were still living in Australia with some of your own friends; and he gave me their name. I wrote to what I thought was your address; but my letter came back to me, and I supposed you had gone to live elsewhere, or perhaps had returned home. And to think that you have been here all the time! Why, I shall keep thinking of you still as if you had been out in Australia! I have been always fancying you there!'

She smiled. 'I have never been out of England in my life. Ah! supposing I had been out of England now, this summer! How little I thought! — She stopped, but at that moment she could have rejoiced in her heart over that loss of fortune which had kept her at home.

Then he looked at her with the old look, which she remembered so well. 'Will you be willing to leave England now? You refused me once, Lily; but I told you I could wait. I have waited for you one-and-twenty years. It's a long time.'

It was a long time. No one knew better than she did how long these years had been; but she was not prepared to find them come to this sudden ending. In her embarrassment, she tried to put his question aside, as if she had not heard it. 'You—you are going out to Australia again?' she said, looking away from him.

'To Australia? No. I have nothing to do in Australia, now that I have found you. But if I ask you to come out to India with me'—

'To India!'

'Do you dislike the idea of India? Ah, that's what I was afraid of.'

He looked so disappointed, that she roused herself to try to understand what he wanted of her, or rather to try to realise it.

'I wouldn't ask you,' he went on anxiously, 'though, after all, you wouldn't find India a bad place. Only, I have some years of work in me yet; and the truth is, Lily, I had set my mind on making some more money; though we have enough to live on, thank God! We have plenty to live on, even if we remain in this country, and if I never see India again. Only, of course, we shan't

be so rich as we might have been, and as I wanted to be for your sake.

She listened to him, but still in a perplexity that almost overpowered her very happiness; in some terror too, it must be owned, at that, to her, alarming prospect of India—terror for his sake as well as for her own.

'We.' He spoke as if they were already one. But did he understand how little she could bring to the common stock? If he wished to make money, did he know what a helpless, useless wife he was going to burden himself with? Ah! if she had only had her fortune! But no; she was not going to wish for that back again—she had got something better; and perhaps he would not mind.

'I am very poor,' she said, looking at him almost pleadingly.

'Don't speak about that; I have enough for us both.'

'But I ought to tell you; and yet, I suppose, it doesn't matter.' She was thinking whether she ought to tell him the story of her brief fortune; but she was reluctant to speak of it.

'There's one thing I want you to tell me,' he said earnestly; 'you won't grudge my having given up the half of this money! You never answered the letter I wrote to you about it, telling you the whole story.—Stay, though,' he continued, seeing her look of astonishment at hearing him speak of giving up money: 'you didn't get my letters—I forgot that. Why, then, I have everything to tell you still. First of all, I don't believe you know that my name has been changed since you knew me.'

'Your name! You are Charles Lawrence.'

'No; I am Charles Fortescue.'

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr Finch, who had been absent in London on some special business, had returned to Millchester, and without a moment's loss of time, without even going to his own house or to his office, went straight from the station to call on Miss Brown.

'I'm pretty sure to have the first telling of it to her,' he said to himself as he drove to Green Street. 'Mr Dixon is away, otherwise I shouldn't be surprised to find that he had managed somehow to be first in the field, and take some of the credit to himself. There's truth, I suspect, in this talk of his having made up to her before she gave up the fortune. Well, it wouldn't be a bad thing for her, I suppose; but to my mind, she's too good for him. Here we are. It will be worth something to see her face when I tell her that she is to have the half of it back again! She no more expects it than I expected it myself for her some time ago. I'm very glad of it. I was beginning to be afraid, this last week, that Major Fortescue was half repenting of his liberality. There seemed to be some screw loose with him. However, it's all right now; and I must say for him that he has behaved as well as she did herself.' And Mr Finch, being now a sworn ally and admirer of Miss Brown, felt that he had paid Major Fortescue a high compliment.

Miss Brown received him with a pleasant friendliness quite different from her former shy, stiff manner. 'I never saw a woman so changed from what she used to be, when I knew her first,' thought Mr Finch.

'I've just come from London, Miss Brown,' he said, smiling too, and looking quite unlike the

cold, hard, formal lawyer who used to frighten her into such helpless confusion of mind. 'I've been away on some little business of yours.' To his surprise, and rather to his dissatisfaction, Miss Brown looked neither astonished nor curious. She bent her eyes on the ground, and she actually seemed to be smiling to herself, in a half-conscious, half-amused way, as if she knew what he was going to tell her.

'You haven't been seeing Mr Dixon!' he exclaimed eagerly. 'But surely he can have told you nothing?'

'No. But, Mr Finch, I was expecting to see you to-day. I knew you were coming back to-day.' She hesitated, blushed, and then went on with something of her old nervousness. 'And I know what you have come to tell me; I know how kind you have been in this matter.'

'You know! You know that Major Fortescue, now that the whole story has been fully explained to him, has agreed to divide the fortune with you?'

'Yes; I know all you said to him about me.' She was blushing deeper and deeper. 'I am sure it was very good of you; but, indeed, you know, Mr Finch, I don't deserve any credit at all. I couldn't have acted differently.'—

'But how in the world have you heard of this? Why, the matter was only finally settled yesterday morning between Major Fortescue's lawyer and myself!'

'I heard of it—yesterday afternoon.'

'Yesterday afternoon! But who could have told you?'

'It was—Major Fortescue himself!'

Mr Finch sat and stared at her. Then she roused herself to a last struggle with her shyness. Mr Finch had been such a kind friend; he was the very first she would like to tell of her new prospects.

'It turns out, Mr Finch, that Major Fortescue and I are old friends. I knew him long ago as Charles Lawrence.'

'Of course: that's his name—Charles Lawrence Fortescue; but I supposed Lawrence was a Christian name.'

'No; he took the name of Fortescue several years ago, for some family reasons.'

'But how came it that he didn't remember your name? You haven't changed it since he knew you.'

Miss Brown coloured. She was not going to confess that she was supposed to have been transformed into a widowed Mrs Dixon—that should remain for evermore a secret between themselves. 'Oh, Brown is such a common name; he never thought of me as—as'—

'As the Miss Brown with whom he was going to law. And so— But how did he find you out at last? And what brought him down here yesterday, I wonder! I know he was here a week ago on some business. How did you chance to meet?'

It was well for Miss Brown's composure that Mr Finch propounded so many questions; she needed only to answer the last. 'We happened to meet in the street.'

'And so, then, you cleared it all up? Well, it's very odd.'

'And, Mr Finch,' she continued hastily, 'he told me what he had meant to do.'

'What he had meant to do! But surely he means it still! It's all settled, you know.'

'No, it's not—that is, it isn't settled quite as you suppose. I wouldn't agree to take back any of the money, you know. I mean'—

'Miss Brown,' he interrupted, fairly losing his patience, 'really, this is too bad. When I thought I had got everything comfortably arranged for you—and now, too, that you find he is an old acquaintance of your own! And you talk of throwing back his offer! If you're going to be so over-scrupulous as all this, I can only beg to decline all further charge of your affairs;' and Mr Finch got up very stiffly and angrily, and took his hat.

'Stop, stop!' she said eagerly, as she put out her still pretty, fair hands to detain him. 'You don't understand. I don't want—Major Fortescue doesn't want—we have changed our plan—I mean I have agreed to something else.'

'What have you agreed to?'

'I have agreed to marry him. I told you I knew him long ago.'

CHAPTER XIV.

The wedding breakfast took place in Mr Finch's house. Mrs Lorimer returned from Scarborough in time to be present at the ceremony; and Mr Dixon's three little girls were the bridesmaids. He himself was still absent—on some particular business,' his sister said. Miss Brown was secretly well pleased. His presence and absence were, indeed, in one sense indifferent to her; but she well knew now what was the real cause of his keeping away from her wedding, and she was glad in her gentle soul that he should be saved such pain, or a shadow of such pain as she had known on a certain wedding day, long, long ago—so long ago now that it seemed to have been an epoch in another life than hers.

'Miss Brown' is almost forgotten in Millchester. But occasionally a tall, pleasant-looking elderly gentleman, and a fair, stately lady, come to visit Mr and Mrs Finch, and then there is much calling and dinner-giving, and general festivity. Of the two, Colonel Fortescue is more popular in society than his wife. She is quiet and shy, and a little formal still. But those who have got to know her well, love her dearly, and perhaps she is all the more precious to her friends because it has cost them a little trouble to find out her worth. But Mrs Fortescue, with her pleasant husband, and comfortable fortune, and cheerful London house, is a person worth cultivating. Perhaps Miss Brown would hardly have been so.

Mrs Lorimer holds to the opinion she once expressed to her brother, that 'Priscilla was really a very good creature.' She has some reason to say so, for though Mrs Fortescue does not care to come very often to Elm Grove, she is always ready to open her doors to her cousins, and Mrs Lorimer finds her house a very convenient asylum during her now pretty frequent excursions to town. And her nieces are still devoted to Cousin Priscilla, who, in her turn, is really fond of the girls, and will probably be a very useful relation to them by-and-by. As for Colonel Fortescue, he thinks Mrs Lorimer a very agreeable, sensible woman, and always makes her welcome; and Priscilla makes her welcome too, and tries not to look too pained when she finds she is going away.

One day Mrs Lorimer said to her: 'It's so odd, Priscilla, to hear your husband calling you Lily.'

'I used to be called Lily once,' she replied

smiling. 'It's a silly name for an old woman, but he likes it, and so do I. He says it is so odd to him to hear you calling me Priscilla.'

'Dear me,' said Mrs Lorimer, 'I never should have thought of calling you by a short, pet name.'

'No; of course not,' said Mrs Fortescue, a little anxiously. She did not want any one else to take to calling her by the dear old name.

'Some people are born to be lucky,' Mrs Lorimer said to her brother one evening on her return from a London visit. 'Now, there's Priscilla. Who would ever have thought it! There she is, settled in London, with a charming house and a carriage, and everything she can want, and a husband who worships the ground she treads on! Who would ever have expected it!'

Mr Dixon's only reply was an impatient rustle of his newspaper. It was not what he had expected.

ANGEL FACES.

['I have not seen her now for a great many years; but *with that same face*, whatever change she may pretend to find in it, *she will go to heaven*; for it is the face of her spirit. A good heart never grows old.'—*Autobiography of Leigh Hunt.*]

We see them with us here,
Bright happy faces, fraught with smiles and mirth,
Yet too perceptibly the traits of earth
Alloy those features dear.

Infancy passes by:
The mother's wondering eyes behold no more
Her baby's backward glances to the shore
Of pre-existence high.

Childhood, alas, declines:
Vanished too soon the genuine glow of youth,
There lives upon the brow life's sad, stern truth,
Stamped in deep furrowed lines.

We see them pass away—
Pass with pale faces; not, indeed, the same,
But innocent as when to earth they came
On life's first opening day.

The signs of pain and care
Are lost in that we feel 'an angel smile;
The marks of worldliness, of sin, of guile—
Not one of them is there!

We close them from our sight,
Yet never can forget. We seem to know
How fairly those transfigured ones will shew
Up in their home of light.

Passed quite beyond our ken,
Still there was *something*, so that we could trace
How Death's strong magic makes an angel face
Out of the face of men.

And there are some, though few,
Who never soil on earth heaven's virgin page,
Who keep unchanged, through every upward stage,
Childhood's own spotless hue.

So beautiful and good,
We feel that all unaltered they might stand
Amid the ranks of the redeemed band,
As here with us they stood.

They need not our poor prayers;
They call for thanks to Heaven, whose love untold
Allowed our hearts awhile the bias to hold
Those 'angels unawares!'

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